1:36 Boas H-3 (1923-1924)948
NBS Bellacoola NBS

as easy as possible. Women seldom experience difficulty and suffer, on the whole, less than do white mothers. It is believed that *Saviaewus*, though invisible, is present on every occasion the rendering of assistance at childbirth is his one kindly act. [844]

The umbilical cord was formerly cut with a mussel shell, but for many years the use of a metal knife has been customary. [177]

The after-birth usually comes away easily, but if there is delay hot ashes are placed around the feet and at the back of the woman to accelerate its expulsion. It is immediately buried or placed beneath a large tree in the forest; if buried, the infant will always be weakly. While one of the assistants disposes of it, another washes the new-born child. The cloths and dishes used for this purpose are buried; failure to do so is believed to cause the child to become blind through a white film forming over the eyeballs. Then the mother and midwives return to the house with the infant, who is a source of tremendous interest to the community. It is proper for the father to recompense the attendants at once, in accordance with their skill and his generosity. A woman who has had several children often assists the daughter of a friend, then, as she gains more experience, her reputation grows and her help is more commonly sought. At the time of this study, 1922, the sum of $2.50 was considered suitable recompense for a fairly proficient midwife. [845] [824] [465]

A new-born child takes the breast readily and a mother would be considered harsh indeed if she failed to suckle her infant whenever it cried, since scientific hours for feeding are not known. A child is wrapped in a shawl or a blanket and carried by the mother wherever she goes; when in the house it sprawls contentedly on the floor, unhampered by clothing. When the umbilical cord falls, it is preserved by the mother. Soon after birth, the parents make provision for their child's welfare by magical means (I, p. 700). The heavy infantile death-rate of the Bella Coola cannot be attributed to lack of love or care on the part of parents, but the attention lavished is commonly not of the kind that assists a weakly child to survive the perils of infancy. [853] [854] [846] [165]

the perils of infancy. During this period, the mother observes
846 various magical taboos to ensure the welfare of her offspring,
237 and endeavours to strengthen herself by rubbing her own body
with non-odoriferous oils obtained from dog-fish, geese, or fresh
olachen. Soft pounded salmon and water are added to an
853 infant's diet as soon as possible, though nourishment from the
breast frequently continues until a child is two, or even three
862 years of age. It is not uncommon to delay weaning until the
mother is again pregnant, when the child is deterred by the
application of soot to the breasts. Marital relations are recom-
846 menced as soon as the mother is strong enough; there is no
specified period of abstinence, nor does it matter whether or
not the woman is lactative.

845 Occasionally, an infant is born with teeth; such an one is
thought to be the reincarnation of a dead ancestor, though no
one knows which. A similar belief is held respecting a child
with dimples in the lobes of its ears; these are regarded as
remnants of the holes pierced for ear-rings. A child that cries
in the womb is said to have great intellect.

847 In former times infanticide was practised for various
reasons. If a woman died in giving birth, it was customary
for her mother to kill the child unless one of her relatives was
able to suckle the motherless infant who was then given to her.
It was not unknown for the mother of a large family to ask the
midwife to kill the child in order to avoid an addition to her
responsibilities. An unmarried girl who became pregnant
[848] often went alone to the forest, delivered herself without assist-
ance, and killed her infant. This was considered to be the
kindest act, since an illegitimate child was said to be, "Like
a Dog." In some cases the prospective mother requested a
friend to cause abortion by kneading the stomach and uterus,
a method said to be effective and seldom fatal. How to do
[195] so is common knowledge, but to practise it is considered dis-
graceful, and the term *iswatl*, applied to such an one, is among
842 the most foul of Bella Coola opprobriums. It is believed that
a woman who has had several children can in some way prevent

842 *To Cause Birth of a Child of the Desired Sex*

789 If a boy is desired: The pregnant woman must have prepared for her a miniature bow and arrows on which she sleeps for four nights and then throws into the fire.

If a girl is desired: The pregnant woman must have prepared for her miniature tools used for beating cedar-bark on which she sleeps for four nights and then throws into the fire.

843 *To Cause Easy Delivery* (two means)

789 (1) The pregnant woman must boil stalks of stonecrop in water and drink freely of the decoction.

(2) A variant of the medicine already described can be applied during pregnancy. Strike the back of the woman with one or more porcupine embryos. The thrower must remain in concealment and the woman to be benefited must be unaware of what is about to be done.

853 *To Cause Increased Flow of Milk*

757 Heat pods of *Sedum Spathulifolium* (Hook) and apply them as a poultice to the breasts of the nursing mother.

MISCELLANEOUS MEDICINES USED BY ADULTS

461 *To Cause Energy*

789 Take the paw of a freshly killed beaver in one hand and pat it with the other, saying:

825 "Please, may I be like you."

This ensures that the man or woman will always work hard, like a beaver.

789 *To Cause Long Life*

Pick up a toad, spit on it four times, saying:

825 "May I be strong like you," and put it down carefully.

886 The basis of this medicine is the belief that toads are capable of resisting greater pressure than other animals. For example, if one is caught in an olachen net, it survives the crushing weight of fish and water and is alive when the net is emptied, though all other living animals so ensnared are killed.

RANUNCULACEAE, BUTTERCUP FAMILY

Anemone globosa Nutt. (A. multifida Poir.), Wind-Flower B C T 137 757

Bella Coola: Not used.

Southern Carrier: Plant, except roots, boiled and decoction taken internally for any sickness. Smoke of crushed leaves inhaled for cold in the head or lungs; for this purpose leaves sometimes placed in water and heated.

Chilcotin: Handfuls eaten in sweat bath for rheumatism. A decoction of the plant sometimes used for the same purpose.

Trautvetteria grandis Nutt., False Bugbane B T 137 757

Bella Coola: Roots pounded in a little water, and the resulting mass, covered with a little soft bark of the red or yellow cedar, applied as a poultice to boils and left on for half a day or a day. Said to promote suppuration and opening of the boil, but to cause such intense burning that it could not be applied to children. Considered less strong than the tall buttercup (page 57), but, like it, preferred to the cow parsnip (page 61), which was used in the same way.

Thalictrum occidentale Gray, Meadow Rue

Chilcotin: A small piece of the root chewed, and some of the juice swallowed, for headache, eye trouble, and sore legs. Loosened phlegm and possibly accelerated the circulation of the blood.

Ranunculus acris L., Tall Buttercup

Bella Coola: Roots used as a poultice for boils in the same way as those of the false bugbane (page 57), but considered stronger and better.

CRUCIFERAE, MUSTARD FAMILY

Sisymbrium incisum Eng., A Hedge Mustard T [752]

Chilcotin: Mashed and applied to bad cuts.

CRASSULACEAE, ORPINE FAMILY

Sedum spathulifolium Hook., Stonecrop B [853]

Bella Coola: Leaves of the plant before it blossomed eaten to start the flow of milk. Said to take effect in one day. Leaves warmed and applied externally for the same purpose.

SAXIFRAGACEAE, SAXIFRAGE FAMILY

B 137 757

Ribes bracteosum Dougl., Blue Currant

Bella Coola: See tideland spruce, page 51.

Ribes laxiflorum Pursh. var., Currant

Bella Coola: Roots boiled in a very small box with hot stones and the weak decoction used each day for washing the eyes when filled with matter.

See also lady fern (page 48). C [757]

Southern Carrier: Not used.